

September 2021



CMS Connection

Illinois Department of Central Management Services' Monthly Newsletter



Director Janel L. Forde

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The month of September marks the end of summer and prepares us to transition to all that autumn brings. We kick off the month with Labor Day, a celebration of the American labor movement and the contributions and achievements of all American workers. For the second year in a row, this holiday holds a special importance as we recognize the selfless contributions of workers who continue to keep our cities, states and nation operational despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's challenges are all too familiar as we are still watching healthcare workers, teachers, first responders and many more essential workers on the frontlines through what remains uncertain times. **I extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to each of you for your dedication to CMS and to helping support the people of Illinois day in and day out. This Labor Day, we celebrate you.**

September also marks the beginning of **Latinx Heritage Month**, a monthlong celebration of the rich history and achievements of Latinx men and women in America. From **September 15 through October 15**, CMS will celebrate through events and a social media campaign to highlight our commitment to diversity in statewide hiring and the contributions of Latinx businesses in Illinois. I invite you to visit our [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages for engaging content and resources to help you celebrate with us.

As we move towards a more equitable and inclusive Illinois, I am proud to celebrate these important holidays and milestones with you. Let us continue to work together to build space to learn more about what unites us and how we can appreciate what makes us different and unique.

Please continue to stay safe CMS and be well.

To learn more and keep up
with CMS, visit us online.



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EMPLOYEE TEAM OF THE MONTH - September 2021

CMS Governmental Affairs Team

Congratulations to the Governmental Affairs team for being recognized as the September 2021 CMS Employee Team of the Month. The team earned this honor for their exemplary work during the recent legislative and lame duck sessions which, for the first time ever, were completely virtual.

The Governmental Affairs team is led by **Wendy Butler**, the Director of Governmental Affairs, and comprised of Legislative Liaison **Steven Booth** and Administrative Assistants **Katie Myer** and **Natalie Hudgens**.

The legislative session began in January 2021 and the team was charged with keeping constant contact during floor debates in the House and Senate in addition to engaging legislators to work through important CMS-related issues via phone, Zoom and WebEx.

By the end of the session in May 2021, the team had successfully worked to get four (4) of five (5) CMS' proposed bills passed, including SB 1608 which streamlines the process and timelines for the disposal of surplus property and makes historic changes to the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Act and Procurement Code. The team also negotiated with legislators to move 17 opposed bills to neutral, ensuring that the agency was able to help strike the balance between being operationally sound and supporting the bill's intent.

One of the most notable feats was the team's work to negotiate and pass a trailer bill (after the end of session) to one of the Black Caucus pillars to mitigate any adverse impacts during the upcoming transition of the BEP to the new Commission on Equity and Inclusion.

"During lame duck we literally worked all through the night and into the next day for several days," said Butler. "It wasn't until Memorial Day weekend that the trailer bill came to fruition."

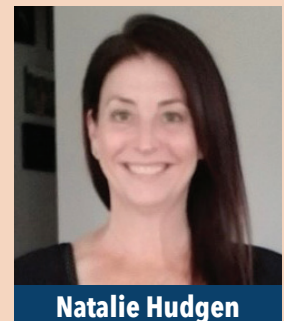
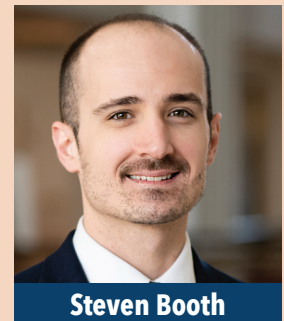
Outside of the legislative season and in preparation for future sessions, the team implemented a Legislation 101 training to help educate CMS Bureaus on how bills become Illinois law.

Butler credits the success of her team to their work in preparing for not only legislative session but also budget hearings, the COGFA hearing and other subject matter hearings.

"It's better to overprepare," said Butler. "Our framework for budget prep has proven successful. We're anticipating the hard questions and flushing out the answers ahead of time."

Despite the challenges of the virtual setting, the Governmental Affairs team successfully coordinated multiple issues among several Bureaus and even found a way to support other State agencies with problematic bills and navigate through a hybrid COGFA hearing.

"I was very proud of our team working in a completely virtual session, keeping in contact with each other and providing updates for individual areas of focus and keeping up with updates during session," said Butler. "While we were siloed, we still had a very fine, cohesive team. Everybody pulled their load and did what they were expected to do to get us across the line."



SAFETY CORNER

National Preparedness Month



September is National Preparedness Month. National Preparedness Month is an observance each September to raise awareness about the importance of

preparing for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time. The 2021 theme is **"Prepare to Protect. Preparing for disasters is protecting everyone you love."**

Each week in September, you are encouraged to explore the following activities which focus on a different aspect of preparedness for individuals, families and communities.

Week 1 September 1-4: Make A Plan

Talk to your friends and family about how you will communicate before, during, and after a disaster. Make sure to update your plan based on the Centers for Disease Control recommendations due to the coronavirus.

Week 2 September 5-11: Build A Kit

Gather supplies that will last for several days after a disaster for everyone living in your home. Don't forget to consider the unique needs each person or pet may have in case you have to evacuate quickly. Update your kits and supplies based on recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control.

Week 3 September 12-18: Prepare for Disasters

Limit the impacts that disasters have on you and your family. Know the risk of disasters in your area and check your insurance coverage. Learn how to make your home stronger in the face of storms and other common hazards and act fast if you receive a local warning or alert.

Week 4 September 19-25: Teach Youth About Preparedness

Talk to your kids about preparing for emergencies and what to do in case you are separated. Reassure them by providing information about how they can get involved.

Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for more information and resources to help you get prepared for disasters and emergencies.

Aetna Workplace Well-being Award

For the second year in a row, the State of Illinois has been awarded the **Making a Difference Gold Level Aetna Workplace Well-being award**. On July 19, 2021, Aetna announced that Be Well Illinois, the State's comprehensive wellness program, has earned the award for its **innovative approach to the improvement of workplace wellness throughout Illinois**.

Be Well Illinois launched at the beginning of 2021 to support the wellness needs of its **more than 440,000 group insurance members and their dependents** throughout the State's agencies, universities and retirement systems.

The Workplace Well-being award was established in 2017 and recognizes middle market, public and labor employers throughout the US who offer an Aetna medical plan to employees. Award recipients are selected based on informa-



tion on their well-being strategy and design, communications and organizational engagement, and program implementation and evaluation.

The Gold level, the award's highest honor, is awarded to employers who successfully create, provide, and support a healthier workplace for employees with effective programming, tools, and resources to help everyone on their own personal well-being journey.

Special recognition is given to the Benefits team for their continued leadership in developing and implementing our statewide benefits program, including **Be Well Illinois**.

BENEFIT CORNER

Fall Into Fitness 5k Save the Date

Attention State members, retirees and covered dependents:

Sept.
19 - 26

Fall into Fitness Virtual 5K/10K Challenge



Join Be Well Illinois and Health Alliance™ for the second Fall into Fitness Virtual 5K/10K Challenge. Whether you're a walker or runner, prefer the morning or afternoon, the challenge allows you to go at your own pace to complete a 5K or 10K any time throughout the week.



Register online August 29 through September 18 at <https://bit.ly/FallintoFitness21>

WELLNESS WEBINARS

Staying Young Through the Years

Wednesday, September 8, 2021 from 12:00 – 1:00 PM CT

Join this webinar to:

- Learn the effects of aging on your body and mind.
- Identify common lifestyle choices which result in premature aging and illness.
- Identify the 3 most important things you should avoid to remain young and vibrant as you age.
- Learn how to incorporate these changes into your everyday routine.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Resiliency: Bouncing Back After a Setback

Wednesday, September 22, 2021 from 12:00 – 1:00 PM CT

Join this webinar to:

- Learn what resilience really is:
 - Identify the characteristics of resilient people.
 - Learn how emotional control, self-awareness and strong relationships relate to resiliency.
- Identify your own resilient capacities:
 - Recognize which situations are most stressful.
- Learn resilience building strategies.

[Click Here to Register](#)

WELLNESS PODCASTS

Leukemia and Lymphoma

This month **Be Well Illinois** will present a special panel discussion about cancer research – and its role in discovering treatments for two of the most common types of blood cancer, leukemia and lymphoma. The two subject matter experts featured in this episode are **Betsy Barnick** and **Pauline Mbuvi**, Certified Clinical Research Professionals at **Carle Cancer Institute** in Urbana, Illinois. Ms. Barnick is the Oncology Clinic Research Manager and Ms. Mbuvi is the Oncology Senior Clinical Research Coordinator at the institute.

[Click here to listen](#)

Don't Fear – Busting 5 Myths about Aging

This month we talk about healthy aging. Our guest is **Faith Roberts**, MSN, RN, and the Executive Director of Community Engagement at **Carle** in Urbana.

[Click here to listen](#)



EVENTS CORNER

Health Equity: Bridging the Gaps

On August 5, 2021, **Be Well Illinois** joined Humana to present a conversation about social determinants of health entitled Health Equity: Bridging the Gaps. More than 120 health plan participants attended this program to learn more about the efforts of CMS and Be Well Illinois to make health-care more equitable in Illinois.

In this session, to listen to **J. Nwando Olayiwola**, MD, MPH, FFAFP, Chief Health Equity Officer and Senior Vice President of Humana, Inc. shared her expertise as a world-renowned health equity leader with expertise in health transformation, technology and innovation, and health disparities improvement.

Thank you to Wellness Coordinator **Shante Burke**, Assistant Deputy Director **Kari Dennison**, Group Insurance Assistant

Division Manager **Nancy Seward** and Deputy Director **Shiloah Tubbs** for your work in bringing this important conversation to the State's employees and retirees.



[Click here](#) to visit the Be Well Illinois website or use the QR code to the right.



2021 Illinois State Fair

CMS hit this year's **Illinois State Fair** to share information about opportunities to work with the State of Illinois, resources for veterans and promote the State's wellness program offerings among current employees. The **CMS Personnel and Benefits teams** collaborated to support the State's recruitment efforts and share information about the benefits of working for the State, including the robust employee benefits offerings like **Be Well Illinois**, the State's comprehensive wellness program. The team was set up in Illinois Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton's tent and also shared information about opportunities for prospective applicants living with disabilities and veterans seeking employment.

The **CMS Bureau of Agency Services** was also at the Fair on Veteran's Day (August 15th) to spread the word about the Federal Surplus Property Program. Under legislation championed by **US Senator Tammy Duckworth**, veteran-owned businesses are now eligible to enroll in the program and access free surplus property.

Thank you to CMS Assistant Director **Mark Mahoney**, Chief Administrative Officer **Sarah Kerley**, Deputy Director **Shiloah Tubbs**, Assistant Deputy Director **Kari Dennison**, Wellness Coordinator **Shante Burke** and Group Insurance Assistant Division Manager **Nancy Seward** for supporting the CMS presence at the Lt. Governor's tent. Thank you Deputy Director Emergency Management **Brent Boesdorfer**, BoAS team member **Joshua Foster**, and Office Administrator IV **Rewa Boldrey** for your work to support Veteran's Day at the Fair.

The Illinois State Fair wrapped up on August 22, 2021. If you missed it, the **Du Quoin State Fair** runs until Labor Day, September 6th. [Click here for more information.](#)



Illinois Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton greeting fairgoers at her tent at the Illinois State Fair.



Office of the Director, Janel L. Forde (217) 782-2141

For more information on this newsletter or any other CMS initiatives, contact:

Marjani Williams, Deputy Director (312) 814-1676

Wendy Butler, Director of Governmental Affairs (217) 785-1941